



Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

August 2005

Dear Sir/Madam:

This letter transmits the *Bangor Hydro-Electric Company (BHE) Northeast Reliability Interconnect Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (DOE/EIS-0372), prepared by the Department of Energy (DOE) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and its implementing regulations. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior and the National Marine Fisheries Service of the U.S. Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are cooperating agencies in the preparation of this Draft EIS.

The proposed DOE action in the Draft EIS is to amend BHE's existing Presidential permit to allow construction along the Modified Consolidated Corridors Route of a single-circuit, 345,000-volt, electric transmission line that would cross the U.S. international border in the vicinity of Baileyville, Maine. DOE has prepared this Draft EIS to evaluate the potential environmental impacts in the United States of the proposed action and the range of reasonable alternatives, including the No Action alternative. Under the No Action alternative, only the previously permitted route could be utilized by BHE for construction of the transmission line. In addition to the Modified Consolidated Corridors Route and the Previously Permitted Route, two other alternative routes are analyzed in the Draft EIS: the Consolidated Corridors Route, and the MEPCO South Route. DOE also analyzed a rescission alternative under which the existing permit would be rescinded and no international transmission line could be constructed. As indicated in the Draft EIS, DOE has designated the Modified Consolidated Corridors Route as its preferred alternative.

You are invited to comment on this Draft EIS during the 45-day comment period that will begin when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency publishes a notice of its availability in the *Federal Register*, expected by August 26, 2005. Comments submitted after the close of the comment period will be considered to the extent practicable. Information on how to submit comments is provided at the end of this letter.

DOE and the cooperating agencies will conduct public hearings in the vicinity of the proposed project during this comment period. You are invited to attend these hearings and to provide oral and written comments on the Draft EIS. Detailed information on the times, dates, and locations of these hearings will be published in the *Federal Register* and also in local newspapers in the near future. The Draft EIS is available on the project's website at <http://web.ead.anl.gov/interconnecteis/> and will soon be on DOE's NEPA website at www.eh.doe.gov/nepa/documentspub.html.

If you have any questions or comments on the Draft EIS, or would like additional copies, please contact me either by mail at the Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability, OE-20, U.S. Department of Energy, Washington, DC 20585, by telephone at 202-586-3362, by fax at 202-318-7761, or by e-mail at Jerry.Pell@hq.doe.gov. However, please note that conventional mail to DOE tends to be delayed because of anthrax screening.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Jerry Pell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jerry Pell, Ph.D., CCM Project Manager Office of
Electricity Delivery
and Energy Reliability

Enclosure